



State Representative Lenny Winkler

LOCAL WATER QUALITY

At the request of Groton Utilities, I introduced legislation that will help address public water issues in our region. Special Act 06-6, An Act Establishing A Drinking Water Quality Management Plan For The Town Of Groton, will help ensure water quality by requiring development of a formal drinking water management plan.

The plan will establish a stronger partnership between water companies and stakeholders, such as the municipalities they serve, environmental groups, economic development agencies, developers, builders and property owners. It must also include managerial input from the Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Environmental Protection and provisions for the protection of critical public water supplies and land use planning.

During a March 6 public hearing, a representative from DPH testified in strong support of the bill, indicating the plan would balance the needs of the watershed communities for economic growth while making provisions for public health protection. The Town of Groton and Groton Utilities also publicly supported the bill during the hearing.

This legislation creates a regional approach to addressing water quality in Southeastern Connecticut. It will empower communities to protect their water supplies and plan for public health issues in the long term.



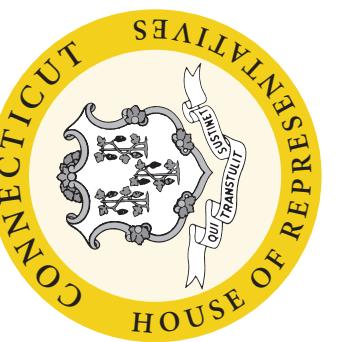
Rep. Winkler introduces members of the UConn Men's Basketball team to the House of Representatives in April 2006.



State Representative

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Groton★Connecticut

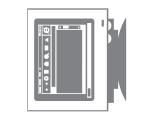
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2006 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



State Representative
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SENIORS

Regulation of Homecare Industry

With State Senator Edith Prague, I introduced legislation (contained in Public Act 06-187) to safeguard our senior citizens against being exploited by enacting additional regulation of the homecare industry. It also gives the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) authority to suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue a registration or take other disciplinary measures in response to violations of the law.

Under the bill, beginning October 2006, these agencies must require new employees to undergo comprehensive background checks and take specified factors into account when making employment decisions based on the checks. Homecare agencies must also provide their clients with written individualized contracts or service plans that identify the services' scope, type, frequency, and duration. In addition, agencies that enter into a contract with a client's family must detail exact compensation.

Property Tax Freeze

Public Act 06-176 allows municipalities to freeze the property taxes on homes owned by certain elderly people. To be eligible, the homeowner or his spouse must be age 70 or older and have lived in the state at least one year. The freeze continues for a surviving spouse who is at least age 62 when the homeowner dies. Homeowners must meet the same income limits as apply to the existing state-reimbursed "circuit breaker" program, which currently gives qualified homeowners age 65 or over a tax credit against the property taxes on their homes.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Prohibiting Underage Drinking On Private Property

Public Act 06-112 is designed to address a loophole in state law that has allowed underage drinking on private property. Under current law, the penalty for illegal possession in public places is a fine of \$200 to \$500. The law makes it illegal for a minor to possess alcohol anywhere, rather than only in public places and makes a first offense an infraction. It also makes subsequent offenses subject to up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both.



Rep. Winkler confers in the House Chamber with Rep. Len Greene, of Beacon Falls, regarding pending legislation

PUBLIC HEALTH

Improving Hospital Admission Process

In many cases, a patient's primary care physician has no involvement in their hospitalization process. This system can be detrimental to the comfort level of the patient but can also prevent their primary doctor from offering important personal medical history and information at a crucial time. Legislation I introduced (Public Act 06-195) marks a start toward establishing consultation of a patient's primary care physician when they are admitted into a hospital.

The legislation requires the Quality of Care Advisory Commission to make recommendations on best practices concerning communications between patients' primary care providers and other providers involved in patient care. The communication practices must also include specialists and hospitalists, which are a consortium of physicians, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Physicians Assistants (PAs). The commission must make its recommendations to the Department of Public Health by January 1, 2008.

Direct Access To Physical Therapy

Under current law, physical therapists can only treat patients referred to them by a physician or other healthcare practitioner. Public Act 06-125 allows patients to be directly treated by physical therapists and specifies procedures they must follow in treating patients directly.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Protection Against Identity Theft

Public Act 06-60 outlaws small scanners and reencoders that can be used to create fake credit cards. This is an ever increasing problem throughout the country and this initiative is a positive step towards protecting our residents. Penalties for violating the new law include up to 10 years imprisonment, fines of up to \$10,000 or both.

Prohibiting "Phishing"

Public Act 06-50 outlaws email "phishing," which is typically a scam that uses email "spam" or pop-up messages to deceive people into disclosing their credit card numbers, bank account information, Social Security number, passwords, and/or other sensitive information. The bill specifically prohibits the practice in Connecticut, making any violation a Class D felony.

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

\$2.3 Billion Package

Public Act 06-136 provides for improvements to highways and mass transit in all corners of the state, allocating \$2.3 billion over a 10 years. Projects to be funded include parking and rail station improvements on the Shore Line East Line; dredging the state's commercial ports; planning for improvements to Route 9 and Routes 2 and 2A in Preston, North Stonington, and Montville; establishing rail freight service with connections to the New London port and expanding bus service for Norwich and New London. It is important to note the legislation does not include previous proposals for increasing the state gasoline tax or bringing back highway tolls. The package will be funded through revenue bonds.

SPENDING AND TAXES

2005-2007 State Budget

The Legislature approved a budget package that benefits Groton and the state as a whole. The Town of Groton will see beneficial increases in both state funding for local education and municipal aid. Per a statutory formula, it will receive \$28,664,680, for the 2006-2007 Fiscal Year, which represents an \$855,393 increase. The town will also receive \$217,515 in revenue sharing that was derived from the state surplus.

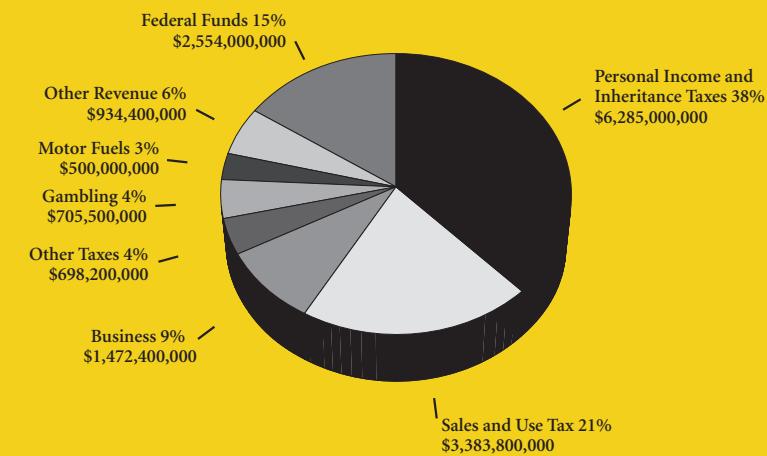
Local Property Tax Relief

I introduced a concept contained in Public Act 06-148 that can be used to help towns and cities ease their property tax burden. It would allow the state to grant municipalities an extension to delay mandatory property tax revaluation.

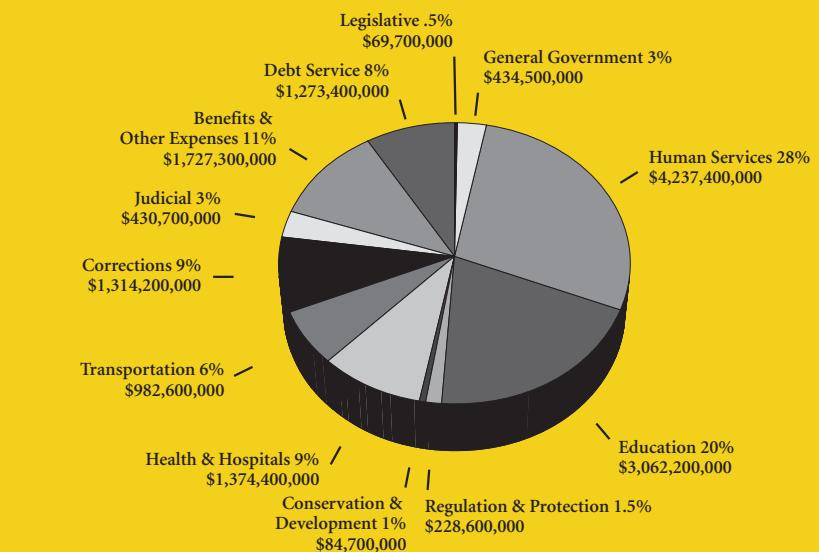
BUDGET ENDING JUNE 30, 2006

The 2006 general fund and the special transportation fund spends \$15.2 billion.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?



*In addition to an expected surplus, the difference between expenditures and revenues is due to tax refunds.